



**OPASTCO**

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March 25, 2004

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

***Ex Parte Notice***

**RE: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service  
CC Docket No. 96-45**

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On Thursday, March 25, 2004, John Rose and Stuart Polikoff of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) and John Duda of FairPoint Communications met with Matt Brill, senior legal advisor to Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy. Our discussion focused on the recent recommended decision of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service concerning universal service portability and the FCC's plans for putting the recommendation out for comment. OPASTCO shared its view that the FCC should address the basis of support for competitive eligible telecommunications carriers (CETCs) now, instead of asking the Joint Board to continue to consider the issue in conjunction with review of the mechanism for rural carriers to succeed the Rural Task Force plan. OPASTCO continues to believe that support for CETCs should be based on their own costs.

In accordance with FCC rules, this letter is being filed electronically in the above-captioned docket.

Sincerely,

Stuart Polikoff  
Director of Government Relations  
OPASTCO